

## **Record of Discussion of Online Session of Capacity Building Programme for Promoting Positive Mental Health, Resilience, and Wellbeing, held on 30.04.2026 at 10:00 AM**

1. An online session of the Capacity Building Programme for Promoting Positive Mental Health, Resilience and Wellbeing was conducted on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2026 as part of the Ministry of Education's fortnightly series of capacity building sessions under the Malaviya Mission Teacher Training Programme. The session was organised for nominated members from centrally funded Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). A total of 88 participants joined the session out of which 81 were faculty members. The initiative continues to support the development of institutional ecosystems that are sensitive to student wellbeing, aligned with objectives of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

2. Mr. D. K. Sharma, Director, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, welcomed the participants to the 42<sup>nd</sup> session of the capacity building programme and highlighted that nearly 2,900 faculty members have been engaged through this initiative over the past two years. He reiterated that the programme aims to create a collaborative platform for faculty to deliberate on pressing challenges within the higher education ecosystem and to collectively strengthen institutional responses.

3. In his opening remarks, he drew attention to growing concerns around student distress, particularly instances of students struggling after entering premier institutions despite prior academic success, and emphasised the need to address stigma associated with mental health. He stressed on the importance of fostering supportive and open campus environments where students feel encouraged to seek help. Further, he stressed the need to reorient higher education towards preparing students for life, including coping with setbacks, rather than focusing solely on examinations and placements. He concluded by introducing the resource persons for the session.

4. The resource persons for this session were:

- ❖ Dr. Jitendra Nagpal, Senior Psychiatrist and Programme Director, Expressions India
- ❖ Ms. Geeta Mehrotra, Expressions India
- ❖ Prof. Nishat Afroz, Banaras Hindu University
- ❖ Prof. Shailender Swaminathan, Sapien Labs, KREA University

5. Dr. Jitendra Nagpal emphasised the increasing urgency of addressing mental health concerns in higher education, highlighting rising distress, lifestyle disorders, and instances of student suicides, particularly in premier institutions. Dr. Nagpal noted that a significant proportion of students experience anxiety, depression, stress, sleep disturbances, and addiction-related concerns, often linked to academic pressure, social isolation, and lifestyle imbalances. He underscored that mental health must be viewed holistically, integrating physical, emotional, and social dimensions, and called for early identification of distress signals.

6. Through an interactive discussion, participating faculty reinforced the importance of building empathetic and connected campus environments. Faculty members shared that simple practices such as asking colleagues and students about their wellbeing, creating informal spaces for dialogue, and conducting reflective or peer-sharing sessions can significantly reduce anxiety and foster a sense of belonging. The need for collective responsibility, rather than viewing mental health as solely a clinical or individual issue, was strongly emphasised.

7. Participating faculty highlighted the importance of curriculum and pedagogical reforms, including providing reflective time, reducing excessive academic pressure, and recognising diverse forms of student effort. The value of promoting inner strength, communication, and life skills was stressed, along with encouraging students to develop multiple identities beyond academic or career success. Dr. Nagpal concluded by reiterating the need for institutions to move beyond competition-driven models and

cultivate compassionate, communicative, and inclusive campus ecosystems aligned with national guidelines.

8. The next session by Ms. Geeta Mehrotra engaged participants in a lively, image-based activity designed to stimulate creative thinking, where faculty generated spontaneous, humorous interpretations linked to real-life situations. Responses shared by participating faculty reflected their diverse perspectives and contextual thinking. This led to a deeper discussion on how creative thinking supports problem solving, coping with stress, and emotional regulation. Participants noted that while children display natural creativity, it often diminishes over time due to rigid educational expectations that discourage original expression.

9. Ms. Mehrotra connected creativity with broader life skills, highlighting its role in enabling adaptive responses to challenges. A video case further illustrated the importance of empathy, communication, and self-awareness, with participants observing that the radio jockey demonstrated assertive yet empathetic communication that helped a distressed individual open up. Faculty reflected that such informal, peer-like communication can be more effective than authoritative approaches.

10. Participants emphasized the need to build an ecosystem of trust on campus. Suggestions included mentoring systems, informal faculty-student interactions such as shared meals, and identifying approachable faculty or peer supporters. Concerns about high student-teacher ratios were raised, alongside the need for institutional support. Key takeaways included the importance of faculty empathy, role-modelling life skills, fostering open communication, and creating safe, supportive environments for student wellbeing.

11. Prof. Nishat Afroz from Banaras Hindu University presented a comprehensive overview of campus-based wellbeing initiatives that integrate creative engagement, preventive care, and targeted support. Activities such as photography competitions, painting workshops, tie-and-dye sessions, and a well-received mental health fair highlighted strong student participation and creativity. Regular health camps, school outreach programmes, and quarterly newsletters featuring contributions by students, further strengthened engagement and awareness.

12. Prof. Afroz described a two-way model of care, combining specialised interventions (counselling, early identification of distress, and crisis support) with preventive strategies like sports, creative activities, alumni interactions, and community engagement to build resilience. Initiatives such as mindfulness sessions in open campus spaces and yoga camps demonstrated context-sensitive approaches to stress management.

13. Looking ahead, Prof. Afroz shared that BHU plans to expand peer support systems, introduce a digital mental health platform, and train student mental health ambassadors. Future priorities include faculty sensitisation, crisis intervention systems, and a stronger data-driven research foundation, along with collaborations on inclusion and women's wellbeing. Participating faculty appreciated the ecosystem approach, while concerns were raised about scaling beyond volunteer-driven efforts. Prof. Afroz noted that the key challenge lies in limited faculty acceptance of mental health concerns, even as students show increasing openness, indicating the need for sustained institutional mindset shifts.

14. Finally, Prof. Shailender Swaminathan's presentation foregrounded a data-driven approach to understanding and improving youth mental health. Building on earlier discussions, he emphasised that while institutions are undertaking diverse wellbeing activities, it is critical to identify which interventions actually make a measurable difference. His work uses large-scale, real-time data, covering over 70,000 students, to track mental health. While young adults in 2008 reported relatively high wellbeing, more

recent cohorts show significantly poorer outcomes. This reflects changing social and environmental pressures.

15. Prof. Swaminathan highlighted multiple contributing factors, including declining family connectedness, early smartphone exposure, dietary patterns, and even emerging concerns like plastic exposure. Importantly, he argued that mental health must be assessed through a multidisciplinary, transdiagnostic lens rather than narrow clinical categories.

16. A key strength of the model is its ability to provide institutions with real-time, actionable insights that are disaggregated by factors such as year of study or gender, allowing targeted interventions and efficient use of limited resources. Participating faculty engaged actively, particularly on findings related to language and wellbeing. While some observed that lack of English proficiency increases stress in academic settings, Prof. Swaminathan clarified that his data suggests bilingual students may experience stronger social connectedness resulting in better mental health outcomes.

17. The session ended with a vote of thanks by Dr. Shivkumar Kandekar from NIEPA.

\*\*\*

**List of Attendees  
Faculty Members**

<b>S. No</b>	<b>Name of Institution</b>	<b>Faculty Nominated</b>	<b>Attendees</b>	<b>Absentees</b>
1	Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University	1. Deepeshwar Singh 2. Ishan Srivastava 3. Jaya Shirvastava 4. Meneka Sahu 5. Naghma Javed 6. Narendra Singh 7. Naveen G H 8. Neetu Singh 9. Renu Pandey 10. Vikas Srivastava	1. Ishan Srivastava 2. Jaya Shirvastava 3. Meneka Sahu 4. Naghma Javed 5. Naveen G H 6. Neetu Singh 7. Renu Pandey 8. Vikas Srivastava	1. Deepeshwar Singh 2. Narendra Singh
2	Central University of Gujrat	1. Atanu Kumar Mahapatra 2. Balaji Ranganathan 3. Dhananjay Rai 4. Dinesh Kumar 5. Ishmeet Kaur Chaudhry 6. Kshamanidhi Adabar 7. Manish 8. Naresh Kumar 9. Sanjay Kumar Jha 10. Seema Rawat	1. Balaji Ranganathan 2. Dhananjay Rai 3. Dinesh Kumar 4. Ishmeet Kaur Chaudhry 5. Kshamanidhi Adabar 6. Manish 7. Seema Rawat	1. Atanu Kumar Mahapatra 2. Naresh Kumar 3. Sanjay Kumar Jha
3	University of Delhi	No faculty nominated		
4	Sant Longowal Institute of Engineering & Technology (SLIET)	1. Ankush 2. Anshul Kumar 3. Ashwani Aggarwal 4. Major Singh 5. Mandeep Ghai 6. Manoj Goyal 7. Pardeep Kumar Jain 8. Pragya Rai 9. Priya 10. Sanjeev Garg 11. Sunpreet Kaur	1. Ankush 2. Pardeep Kumar Jain 3. Anushka Bnasal	1. Anshul Kumar 2. Ashwani Aggarwal 3. Major Singh 4. Mandeep Ghai 5. Manoj Goyal 6. Pragya Rai 7. Priya 8. Sanjeev Garg 9. Sunpreet Kaur
5	Indian Institute of Information Technology, Design & Management, Kancheepuram	1. Anudeep V 2. Gowri. A 3. Kannadasan K	1. Anudeep V 2. Gowri. A 3. Kannadasan K	1. Nagamanikandan G.

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Maithilee Laxmanrao Patawar</li> <li>5. Manjusha Battabyal</li> <li>6. Nagamanikandan G</li> <li>7. S. Kalpana</li> <li>8. Samriddho Roy</li> <li>9. Shubhankar Chakraborty</li> <li>10. Y. Ashok Kumar Reddy</li> <li>11. Yuvaraj S</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Maithilee Laxmanrao Patawar</li> <li>5. Manjusha Battabyal</li> <li>6. S. Kalpana</li> <li>7. Samriddho Roy</li> <li>8. Shubhankar Chakraborty</li> <li>9. Y. Ashok Kumar Reddy</li> <li>10. Yuvaraj S</li> <li>11. Naveen Kumar</li> </ol>	
6	National Institute of Technology, Kurukshetra	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bharati Sinha</li> <li>2. Dheeraj Kumar Sharma</li> <li>3. Ghanapriya Singh</li> <li>4. H. D. Chalak</li> <li>5. Jitendra Singh Yadav</li> <li>6. Manoj Kumar Sinha</li> <li>7. Monika Mittal</li> <li>8. Pankaj Sahlot</li> <li>9. Poonam Jindal</li> <li>10. Ritu Garg</li> <li>11. Sunita Chauhan</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dheeraj Kumar Sharma</li> <li>2. Ghanapriya Singh</li> <li>3. H. D. Chalak</li> <li>4. Manoj Kumar Sinha</li> <li>5. Monika Mittal</li> <li>6. Pankaj Sahlot</li> <li>7. Poonam Jindal</li> <li>8. Ritu Garg</li> <li>9. Sunita Chauhan</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bharati Sinha</li> <li>2. Jitendra Singh Yadav</li> </ol>
7	National Institute of Technology, Nagaland	No faculty nominated		
8	Indian Institute of Technology, Madras	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Abhijit Chaudhuri</li> <li>2. Babji Srinivasan</li> <li>3. Ilaksh Adlakha</li> <li>4. Prabha Mandayam</li> <li>5. Prabhat Ranjan Pujahari</li> <li>6. Sandipan Bandyopadhyay</li> <li>7. Santosh Kumar Sahu</li> <li>8. Sarith P Sathian</li> <li>9. Sathish Kumar A</li> <li>10. Srinivasa Rao Bakshi</li> <li>11. Tarun Naskar</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sathish Kumar A</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Abhijit Chaudhuri</li> <li>2. Babji Srinivasan</li> <li>3. Ilaksh Adlakha</li> <li>4. Prabha Mandayam</li> <li>5. Prabhat Ranjan Pujahari</li> <li>6. Sandipan Bandyopadhyay</li> <li>7. Santosh Kumar Sahu</li> <li>8. Sarith P Sathian</li> <li>9. Srinivasa Rao Bakshi</li> <li>10. Tarun Naskar</li> </ol>
9	Indian Institute of Technology, Indore	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Akshay Pratap Singh</li> <li>2. Antony Vijesh</li> <li>3. Ayush Tripathi</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Akshay Pratap Singh</li> <li>2. Antony Vijesh</li> <li>3. Ayush Tripathi</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Kailasham</li> <li>2. Pravarthana Dhanapal</li> <li>3. Somaditya Sen</li> </ol>

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Debashish Pattanayak</li> <li>5. Kailasham</li> <li>6. Kedarmal Verma</li> <li>7. Pradeep Kundu</li> <li>8. Prakash Gaikwad</li> <li>9. Pravarthana Dhanapal</li> <li>10. Somaditya Sen</li> <li>11. Vivek Verma</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Debashish Pattanayak</li> <li>5. Kedarmal Verma</li> <li>6. Pradeep Kundu</li> <li>7. Prakash Gaikwad</li> <li>8. Vivek Verma</li> </ol>	
101	Indian Institute of Management, Udaipur	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Amish Dugar</li> <li>2. Anirban Adhikary</li> <li>3. Jayant Nasa</li> <li>4. Kirti Mishra</li> <li>5. Kunal Kamal Kumar</li> <li>6. Probal Mojumder</li> <li>7. Rajesh Agrawal</li> <li>8. Samadrita Bhattacharyya</li> <li>9. Ujjwal Das</li> <li>10. Vijayta Doshi</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Amish Dugar</li> <li>2. Anirban Adhikary</li> <li>3. Jayant Nasa</li> <li>4. Kirti Mishra</li> <li>5. Kunal Kamal Kumar</li> <li>6. Probal Mojumder</li> <li>7. Rajesh Agrawal</li> <li>8. Samadrita Bhattacharyya</li> <li>9. Ujjwal Das</li> <li>10. Vijayta Doshi</li> <li>11. N. Vishwanathan</li> </ol>	-
11	Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Kolkata	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Anuradha Bhat</li> <li>2. Babu Sudamalla</li> <li>3. Biltu Dan</li> <li>4. Bipul Pal</li> <li>5. Chiranjib Mitra</li> <li>6. Dwaipayan Roy</li> <li>7. Kripabandhu Ghosh</li> <li>8. Ritambhara Gond</li> <li>9. Soumya Bhattacharya</li> <li>10. Sreeramaiah Gangappa</li> <li>11. Subila K. B</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Anuradha Bhat</li> <li>2. Babu Sudamalla</li> <li>3. Biltu Dan</li> <li>4. Dwaipayan Roy</li> <li>5. Kripabandhu Ghosh</li> <li>6. Soumya Bhattacharya</li> <li>7. Sreeramaiah Gangappa</li> <li>8. Subila K. B</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bipul Pal</li> <li>2. Chiranjib Mitra</li> <li>3. Ritambhara Gond</li> </ol>
12	School of Planning and Architecture, Bhopal	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Adithya Bandari</li> <li>2. Anurag Aman Kaushal</li> <li>3. Aparna Sai Dharmavarapu</li> <li>4. Nitika Negi</li> <li>5. Pallavi Tiwari</li> <li>6. Prerna Mandal</li> <li>7. Rudra Murthy Itta</li> <li>8. Saurabh Kishore Ojha</li> <li>9. Saurabh Popli</li> <li>10. Tanya Kaur Bedi</li> <li>11. Vishnu K Suresh</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Anurag Aman Kaushal</li> <li>2. Aparna Sai Dharmavarapu</li> <li>3. Nitika Negi</li> <li>4. Pallavi Tiwari</li> <li>5. Prerna Mandal</li> <li>6. Rudra Murthy Itta</li> <li>7. Saurabh Kishore Ojha</li> <li>8. Saurabh Popli</li> <li>9. Tanya Kaur Bedi</li> <li>10. Vishnu K Suresh</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Adithya Bandari</li> </ol>

13	Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur		1. Jayashree Gajjam	
14	Institutional Affiliation Not Known		1. Harisharya 2. Rupesh Singh 3. Shradha Tripathi 4. Shyam	

Affiliation Details	Name of the Attendees
Ministry Officials, Resource Persons, Officials from NIEPA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mr. D. K. Sharma, Director, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education</li> <li>2. Dr. Jitendra Nagpal, Senior Psychiatrist &amp; Program Director, Expressions India</li> <li>3. Ms. Geeta Mehrotra, Expressions India</li> <li>4. Prof. Nishat Afroz, Banaras Hindu University</li> <li>5. Prof. Shailender Swaminathan, Sapien Labs, KREA University</li> <li>6. Dr. Shivakumar Kandekar, NIEPA</li> <li>7. Ms. Richa Shrivastava, Consultant, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education</li> </ol>